(c) and (d) The Tobacco Board under the Ministry of Commerce provides assistance to farmers through various extension & development schemes to reorient the production of tobacco to enhance its quality and productivity in tune with the changing international demand and quality. It also participates in international trade fairs/ exhibitions to promote Indian tobacco and organizes delegations of tobacco traders and exporters to various countries.

Waiver of interest on loans of coffee growers

1487. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the coffee growers have approached the Centre for waiver of interest component on the plantation loan obtained by them; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Centre's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) In the recent past various coffee grower associations have represented to the Govt, of India for waiver of the interest component accumulated on the loans availed by them from various banks. In response to these representations and in light of the problems being faced by the growers, the Govt, of India has announced a Coffee Relief Package during the month of May, 2005. The first component of this package provided for sharing of interest burden of Rs. 287.10 crore accumulated on Special Coffee Term Loans during the moratorium period (2002-03 to 2004-05), among the Govt, of India, concerned Banks and coffee grower loanees to the extent of 1/3rd each. Earlier, the last day for depositing the growers' share of interest was 30th June, 2005 which was later extended to 31 st May, 2006.

Reduction in export of iron-ore

†1488. SHRI AJAY MAROO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering any proposal for reducing the export of iron-ore in a phased manner;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.